

*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of
God, and a Divine Communion, recommended and
inforced, in*

A
S E R M O N

PUBLICLY DELIVERED

At a MEETING of the PEOPLE called QUAKERS,
held in Leeds, the 26th of the Sixth Month,
commonly called June, 1769.

Carefully taken down in Characters at the same
time, by JAMES BLAKES, junior.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor of the following Sermon, which was delivered extempore to a large Auditory of different Persuasions, conceives himself obliged to acknowledge, that the Idea of printing it, was not successful enough to obtain the Preacher's *Approbation*.—Nevertheless through the repeated Requests of many of the Hearers, who were of opinion it might be rendered more extensively useful if printed, provided a serious and impartial Attention were paid to those important Truths which are the Subjects enlarged upon therein, he has been prevailed upon to submit it to the Candour of the Public; being not without a Hope that the apparent Benevolence of the Motive which first suggested the Design, will in some measure excuse him to the Preacher for the Part he has taken in the Execution of it.

Leeds, 1771.

J. B.



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S E R M O N.

IT is not in the "Oldness of the Letter *," or in unfeeling Formality, but from the animating warmth of Gospel Love, that I salute this assembly in these expressions;

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all always. Amen †.

It is the constant language of that evangelical spirit, from which arises this tribute of "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will to men ‡," and which I am thankful to feel not restrained within less compass than the Bulk of Mankind; but zealously and ardently pointing towards all such as profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a hope of salvation by him.

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There

* Rom. vii. 6.

† 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

‡ Luke ii. 14.

There is something further couched in this affectionate salutation than the language of Love; the language of Wisdom.—That Wisdom which is “profitable to direct *,” seems to me very evidently and very eminently displayed by the Father of mercy and kindness in these expressions; which, by divine assistance, I would endeavour a little to open, and to urge as words of some signification, unto all such whose minds are at times turned to contemplate, and not only contemplate, but also to pursue, “the things which make for peace †.”

I. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no language, or form of words, sufficiently copious and expressive, though raised to the utmost extent or height of description, for representing the adorable manifestations of heavenly kindness, goodness, condescension and mercy, or for exhibiting the things which proceed from the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: but it is allowable to speak whereof we know, according to the Measure of knowledge, and to utter, according to the proportion of Strength given, what we now see in part, and what from experience we feel, of the merciful kindness of God; and which, as we faithfully follow his will, we shall hereafter more fully and comprehensively behold.—This I apprehend is necessary for all, to whom a revelation of the Christian Religion has been made by means of
Holy

* Eccl. x. 10.

† Rom. xiv. 19.

Holy Writ; and in an especial manner, where He that is the discoverer of states, has opened their understandings to believe the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, and the sacred records of that miraculous Favour and Grace that came by Jesus Christ.

But for my own part, I must freely acknowledge there was a time of my life, in which I would gladly have relieved myself from following the arduous paths of religion, by turning aside into the paths of Scepticism and Infidelity. My mind was ready to alledge, as some at this time of day may be, "How can we believe without Evidence?" "There is not a sufficient Evidence of Truth to convince my judgment, or to induce me to believe." I know this has been the allegation of some: But I have found there is no Deficiency of evidence, but an unwillingness to admit the Force of that evidence, which would properly influence the mind; and I have reason to apprehend this has been the case with others: for if there was a thorough submission, and disposition of mind to receive the Truth in the Love of it; to endeavour after it in its genuine simplicity; to look at it with a single eye; and, if I may be allowed the expression, to suppress or banish all the "*buts* and *ifs*;" we should soon find the Evidence of the Christian Religion to be lively and incontestable, and effectually to operate to make us wise and good; Wise, with the Wisdom that is to Salvation;

tion; and Good, with the Goodness that is of God, the Source of Goodness.

But whilst people “ take counsel, and not of “ God,” and suffer themselves to be “ covered with “ a covering and not of his Spirit *,” they are unwilling to admit the force of those truths which would “ separate the precious from the vile,” and “ purify us according to his word.”—While this is the case that many deviate in point of Faith, they may complain of the want of Evidence, respecting the Certainty and Truth of the Christian Religion; and complain with as much justice, as a man who wilfully hides himself in Darkness, complains of his Incapacity of Seeing. For we have *such* an evidence and understanding imparted by the Light and Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as doubtless abundantly displays the immediate Regard and Love of God, as recorded in Holy Writ; and from which I freely acknowledge an internal illumination *necessary*, for all that would have valid claim to the Christian Religion; whereby we obtain a firm assurance of, and a well-grounded belief in, those glorious truths.

We have sometimes been accused of allegorizing away the important truths of the Christian Religion as recorded in Holy Writ: It is far, very far, from our intention or inclination! We want to *inforce* them, upon ourselves, upon our brethren, with

* Isaiah xxx. i.

with all that requisite weight which commands their belief; calling to a belief of *Heart*, not a mere assent with the Tongue; but “a belief of Heart unto righteousness ||.”

We have been distinguished, and are not ashamed of the distinction, for preaching “Christ within;” but we never preach a Christ within, opposed to, or derogating from, a Christ *without*.—We fully believe not only in his glorious and gracious appearance amongst the sons of men, “as in the “volume of the book it is written *;” but we also believe in his inward and spiritual appearance, “the second time without sin unto salvation †;” in which we are supported by a cloud of witnesses §, and by the doctrine of the holy Author of the Christian Religion, enforcing his inward and spiritual manifestation (the manifestation of his Grace) in as clear and indubitable a manner, as from the testimonies delivered concerning his external appearance.

But the mystery of ungodliness hath powerfully wrought with some who profess the Christian name, in opposition to the force of those testimonies with regard to his internal appearance, or manifestation of himself in the hearts of mankind; and to render inadmissible the doctrine of an inward and spiritual communion, the revelation of Light, Life, and Good to the souls of men, immediately imparted
for

|| Rom. x. 10. * Heb. x. 7. † Ibid. ix. 28. § Ibid. xii 1.

for our redemption and sanctification.—Th's would lead people home from the flowery paths of Ease and Speculation, into the arduous one of Practice: It would transfer religion from the *Head* to the *Heart*; and, in its progress, would remove every obstacle to the admission of the doctrine of an inward and spiritual manifestation of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But there hath been a lamentable defection from the Life and Spirit of true christianity, wherein the Old Man, under all the pomp of Opinion, and assenting to indubitable truths, still remains in full possession of every inordinate love, and his goods are at ease. A mind disguised with JACOB'S Voice, and ESAU'S Hands, sound orthodox Principles, with a schismatic Heart, ingrosses the Formalist of all names and distinctions to religion; the old man being at ease with his goods, in a state of self-sufficiency, either rejoicing under a Form, and the false shade of Opinion and regularity of conduct, or in the pomp of a specious external appearance; wherein some continue possessed of an unhappy tranquility or ease of mind, and are endeavouring to build up a tabernacle quiet and safe, content with a Form, or depending upon a bare Belief in the doctrines of the christian religion.—But there is a work, whereby the *Old Earth* and the *Old Heavens* are made to *shake*, and must be removed; which is of the adorable mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he thus may reveal himself;—

“ Yet

“ Yet once more will I shake not the Earth only, “ but also HEAVEN † ! ” — Not only the Earth, not only against the Inhabitants of the earth ; but the work of God is made conspicuous in the Awakening of the ungodly, for their conversion from sin and death, unto righteousness and life. — “ Yet once more will I shake HEAVEN ! ” — The glorious specious Appearances of Truth, and Doctrines recorded and assented to, but yet not reduced to Experience ; truths received and confessed by the Tongue, but the Heart revolting from their efficacious influence.

“ Yet once more will I shake not the Earth only, “ but also Heaven.” And this word, yet once *more*, signifies the REMOVING of those things which are shaken. And undoubtedly the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in its manifestation, procedure, and effects, would shake *every* false rest in which any deluded soul may have fixed its repose : He would shake every false rest among those under all names and distinctions to religion, who are trusting in *Name* and in *Form*, without the POWER, or an experience of its virtual effects upon the soul ; these all appertain to one family : — and not only so, but he would shake every false rest, yea and the FOUNDATION, of those who are building upon a *Profession*, and upon the Apostles *Testimony* of Jesus Christ ; because they are only building upon the *Credibility* of those truths, yet cannot experimen-

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† Heb. xii 26.

tally say, Through the Grace of our Lord Jesus,
 " We acknowledge the Truth, according to God-
 lineſs *."

They that are of the World, come here alſo to a houſe fortified with *Opinion*, and are ſupporting themſelves in having obtained a clear, full, and concise knowledge of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. But there is a Power that will ſearch every *false foundation*, and overturn every ſuperficial dependence on Human Production, that is inconſiſtent with the uniform tendency of his ſacred Law, faſhioned upon the plan of unchangeable, everlaſting Wiſdom.---It is not of Man, or by Man, but proceeds from the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whereby thoſe truths are brought home to the Hearts of mankind. The gracious effects of his powerful working, are maniſeſted to bring us home from a ſtate of *false dependence*, that we may humbly and experientially acknowledge, " In God is my Salvation, and my Glory, the " Rock of my Strength †: in God alone is my " truſt."

But " the Strong Man," armed with OPINION and BELIEF, has nevertheleſs been purſuing *viti-ated Affections*; which people have endeavoured to retain, and gloſſed over with a ſpecious lofty Profeſſion; fully aſſenting to the truths handed forth
 from

* Titus i. 1.

† Pſal. lxii. 7.

from the experience of others, but unreduced to practice in themselves.

“ While the strong man armed keeps the palace,
 “ the things that he possesseth are in peace *;
 “ until a stronger than he overcome, and cast him
 “ out with all his goods.”--All those things that
 are inconsistent with the holiness and purity of the
 Divine Nature, which are pointed clearly out, and
 may be understood, by the declaration of our Lord
 concerning the Church, wherein “ every plant that
 “ is not of my heavenly Father’s right hand plant-
 “ ing, shall be rooted out †.”--What would then
 become of all those things, which a mistaken judg-
 ment calls “ but *little* things?” Of the Pleasures
 and Amusements of the present age, invented by
 the sons of dissipation, who add wings to their
 moments, and are carried forward with rapidity
 through time, unprepared, to a final judgment?
 What a multiplicity of those things which are
 “ not of the Father, but of the World that lies in
 “ wickedness ‡:” things of which I shall not now
 particularly speak; but they are such as have no
 life in the LIFE of the Lord Jesus Christ in Man,
 but are ever Enemies to it, while the affections are
 earthly, and confined to this world, however the
 partiality of deluded minds may think to seek a
 resource, and attempt to obviate the seeming Ri-
 gours of the gospel, or find for themselves an easier
 and more flexible way, by resting upon a mere

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Belief

* Luke xii. 21.

‡ Mat. xv. 13.

† 1 John v. 19.

Belief of *Systems* (the Goods belonging to the strong man armed) wherein they endeavour to support themselves, and are high in Profession, but weak respecting Practice! A species of Deviation from the Power of Truth proceeding from the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which would search the secrets of every heart! It would open to the view of the attentive mind their nature, and the situation they are in; what is of God, and what is not of God; what is pure, and what is impure: It would ever prove a more decisive test in all our actions, a more certain criterion in our conduct through life, than it is to be feared the generality of Christian professors have attained, and which it is absolutely impossible for the Strong Man armed to produce, with all his seeming Sanctity of the Flesh, or strenuous support of Belief, and a multitude of external performances; notwithstanding he may endeavour to plead for the "Law and the Commandment," and think thereby to attain the mark of Christ's followers, who "walk therein all the days of their lives,"

But although they are thus lifted up in their minds, there is an Omniscient and Omnipresent BEING, who cannot be deceived or imposed upon; and it is impossible to invalidate that invariable obligation to live under the Power of the Cross of Christ, however they may endeavour to find means, by professing his Name without taking up a Cross to the inordinate pleasures and pursuits of this world,

world, or attribute to themselves the merits of his death, without a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, wherein alone we are made partakers of an everlasting glory,

I beseech you by the most powerful motive of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that every one may endeavour to cultivate in your minds a living Sense of Religion; and that we may all experience the purity and sanctity of its nature to operate in our hearts; and as members of one Family, tho' distinguished by various Names, we may continue as Brethren and Fellow-pilgrims, in our passage through the wilderness of this world, to an endless Glory; that we may run with patience the arduous race, although through distress of temptation and probation, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,

I beseech you by the Mercies of God, by every powerful motive, in the language of Love, the Love of God, which lives in my heart, lay hold of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; by which alone our hearts and minds can experimentally acknowledge, that it is by the virtue of it we are cleansed, purified, and redeemed from the pollutions and defilements of the world; and whereby we become fashioned in the image of righteousness and true holiness.

Let

Let us next consider the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as offered for our REDEMPTION.--- And I have no doubt of its being acknowledged, by all who have any understanding of the nature of True Christianity, or care about their immortal souls, that the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ manifestly leads to the doctrine of "Repentance "from dead works, and of Faith towards God;" to a redemption of the soul from death, hell, and the grave; consequently, from that state of punishment due to sinners, where the ungodly receive the reward of their disobedience:---Neither have I any doubt of our being accompanied herein by a cloud of witnesses, who *feel* the Truth of the Christian Religion, and know the force and authority of those testimonies concerning it.---And let us take along with us the knowledge which the apostles and primitive believers had of the Christian Redemption and Doctrine in their times, that "the "Grace of God, that brings salvation, hath appeared to ALL men; teaching us, that denying "ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present "world; looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearance, of the Grace of God, through "our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of "good works &c." This is the redemption proposed by the Gospel, which commands our assent, and will

will remain obligatory throughout all ages of the Christian dispensation.

But there has been a claim to Redemption, introduced in the Apostasy from the LIFE of Religion, maintained amongst professors under various names, who plead the Impossibility of being redeemed from the Power of Sin;---a Redemption from the Penalty, but not from the Commission;---a Redemption from the Punishment without a Victory over the transgressing nature:---And herein the mystery of unrighteousness hath powerfully wrought, and still works, thus to substitute Names for Things, Sounds instead of Substance; and a Profession instead of a lively Possession of its powerful and virtual effects upon the mind.--But it is a Redemption from "*all iniquity*," whereby alone he will "*purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their *Sins* *." From the Worldly Nature, and from the Corruptions and Defilements in the world.--A Redemption from the Power of Sin;---wherein we are sanctified, and justified, in the sight of God, and are prepared for an admission into the kingdom of heaven, as we are possessed of this efficacious redemption:---"It is like unto a little Leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal †."---It was operative

* Matt. i, 21.

† Ibid. xiii. 33.

operative;--and being diffused through the three measures of meal there was a *real, inberent* Change, or partaking of its own *Nature*;--a change effected by the powerful diffusion of that leavening Virtue.

THIS is the Redemption of Jesus Christ;---a Redemption effected by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.---It consists not in the Strength, or Change, of *Opinions*, or a formal Conception;---but as we experience a gradual progression from glory to glory, and from one degree of similitude, or resemblance, of the Divine Image to another, until we attain a victory here, and the consummation of happiness in a future state.

I apprehend this is the genuine nature of Christian Redemption, as proposed by the Gospel, which will stand the test, and bring forth the glorious fruits of "*RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE, and JOY* in the "*HOLY GHOST*;" and wherein he will refine, and purify unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

We are not to ascribe or attribute to ourselves any *Merit* of *Works*, as performed in the strength of a natural Understanding, or from any religious Attainments; but ever to retain a consciousness of our inability; as knowing nothing belongs to us as Creatures, but "Blushing and Confusion of Face;" and that our growth towards perfection proceeds
from

from the assistance dispensed of his unbounded mercy and grace; as saith the apostle, "It is by the Grace of God I am what I am; and his Grace, which is in me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the Grace of God which is IN me."*

I have no doubt that many of your minds, under various names and distinctions to religion, have been at times touched with a feeling sense of the nature and excellency of true christianity; with a *blessed* sense of it, proceeding from the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.---May you *so* follow on, as to experience a *further* progress in its efficacious operation upon your minds, and witness its Leavening Virtue into its own *Nature*, drawing you from the temper and defilements of the world, by a transformation of your minds from dead works, to serve the living God!—wherein you would truly experience an increase in strength, derived from him to whom "all Power is given †," power to effect every excellent purpose, and fill up to you all those relative attributes which are inseparable from the Divine Nature; and wherein he is mercifully communicating an holy evidence of Faith in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; a faith in "things not seen, the substance of things hoped for §."

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May

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† Mat. xxviii. 18.

§ Heb. xi. 1.

May we be engaged in an humble dependence, and awful worship, before the God of heaven and earth! continually contemplate him in his adorable perfections, as the Father and Fountain of all our mercies; and faithfully regard every part of our duty in bringing "Glory to God," proposed as the Mark of Redemption and Reconciliation, through the Merits and Meditation of a crucified Saviour; "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—In this manner we become members of his sacred Militant Church on Earth; and are entering upon the path to the Triumphant Church in Heaven.

We were made a little lower than the angels, and intended to partake in the fruition of happiness with the spirits of just men made perfect, in the general assembly of the first-born sons of God. And I have no doubt but he will still beautify his footstool by the gift of his Grace, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, proceeding from himself, the Author and Fountain of good, and of every perfect work, whereunto we are called by his Spirit, and become united in membership with his sanctified church and family:—So that having filled up the measure of our days in the world, we may finally receive the beatific reward of an endless life with the just of all generations.

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I have no doubt of the possibility of *Access* to the Father while cloathed with *mortality*, through the mediation and intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—But it is as we admit his Spirit to operate in our minds to *prepare* us for access, and duly attend to the assistance afforded us.

“ May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be “ with you all, always!”—May you be built up in his Grace, and continue engaged in the contemplation of his adorable perfections! the infinite Kindness and Goodness of God! the excellency and purity of the Christian Nature! and, by a separation from the world, obtain a well-grounded hope “ that he may be with you all, always, Amen.”

Yet notwithstanding an happy advancement may be known, a state of humble Watchfulness is our duty, and our safety.—I cannot join with the opinion of those, who maintain the doctrine of “ *once in Grace, ever in Grace.*”—I believe that it is possible for those who have been visited with a measure and manifestation of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that have “ tasted the good word of “ life, and of the powers of the world to come †,” to *fall away*.—It is necessary to continue in a state of Daily Dependence on Divine Strength, for our faithful perseverance in the uniform progressive labour of a christian life, and a daily walking with the God of our lives, to preserve us from evil.—

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† Heb. vi. 5.

The apostle, who seemed to entertain a requisite diffidence with regard to himself, perceived the necessity of a Continuance in the Communion of Grace, in order to a happy conclusion; and was cautious, while he was preaching to others, "lest himself should become a cast-away *."---Let us, therefore, not content ourselves that we begin and run well for a *Season*; but retain upon our minds a living SENSE of religion, cloathed with native simplicity and purity, proceeding from the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Love of God.

He hath *so* loved us, and manifested his inconceivable favour towards us, that he hath not dealt with us according to our *Merits*, but of his free and unmerited GRACE, that we might become heirs of an endless inheritance in glory! "God *so* loved the world, that he sent his own Son into the world to be a LIGHT to the World; a Light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be his Salvation to the ends of the earth §."---It is this heavenly Love, the Love of God, that is the grand and solemn cement of his family, both here and hereafter: wherein we are united to him, and in fellowship one with another. It binds all into an uniform consistency, both in heaven and earth.---Many *other* objects of our love are local and temporary,

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

§ Acts xiii. 47.

temporary, limited to Time and Place, or confined to this world, and to the things that are in it: but the Love of GOD is an *endless* commandment.---It is CHARITY; that divine Charity, that will remain when testimonies shall cease, and declarations come to an end;---in a participation whereof we shall still continue to join in holy worship and adoration unto God, the Author of our being.

It is in the enjoyment of this divine and ardent Charity, that the celestial inhabitants in the realms of light receive the sacred Emanations of LOVE, and enjoy the Favour of God in a participation of those ineffable pleasures which it yields to the glorified assembly of saints in bliss.---And, indeed, it seems to me to be the grand Source of all happiness and duty; happiness in heaven, as well as perfection of wisdom to the sons of men, derived from those gracious relative attributes of the Divinity wherein he is mercifully communicating the essential part of his own Nature, being, in Himself, “altogether lovely †,” consummate in the perfection of holiness, and unparallelled in wisdom!---wherein we are sometimes favoured with the fruition of his Love, measurably imparted, to our comfort and unspeakable joy, infinitely superior to all that this world can afford, and which will remain, when “the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up §!”---The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

† Canticles v. 16.

§ 2 Peter iii. 10.

Christ, and the Love of God, will then open unto the soul that glorious prospect of unutterable, inconceivable happiness, which is the provision of God for the righteous, and those who faithfully persevere to a peaceful and happy conclusion.

It is by virtue of the Grace and Love of God, that we are enabled to advance in a proper progression through the various steps of a religious life; and which would kindle an ardour of affection in the mind, with desires for a continued supply of that heavenly virtue, which nourishes the soul up unto eternal Life.---A Want of *this*, makes us bow to the god of this world, and to things that are in it.---The love of Money, Riches, and the Praise of Men; which with various powers of seduction are presented to our view, and our prospects are bounded by the narrow conceptions of an Earthly Mind.---It is a love of those things, which obstructs the progress of religion.---A secret deviation from the Love of God to a Love of this World, has prevailed in many.---But how can it be otherwise, since like will ever assimilate with its like? And while the BODY is terrestrial, the GLORY is terrestrial, and the body will continue engaged in the pursuit of earthly things.---For every mind will attend to its Similitude.---And *while* the Body is terrestrial, the Glory will *remain* terrestrial, however it may assume a resemblance to matters of a *higher* nature, and superior importance.---Yet while the *Glory* is earthly, our *Views* earthly, and confined

fin'd to the pleasures and pursuits of *this* world, our *Affections* are earthly, and we are rendered incapable of that Love, which is of a divine and *heavenly* nature.

A terrestrial love presides and is prevalent in the minds of many; which has obstructed the power of truth, and been the cause of feeble *purposes* and feeble *efforts*, enfeebled *minds* with irresolute *intentions*, and proved the occasion of a defection amongst Christian professors, who have been desirous to form something more amiable and agreeable, or better adapted to their natural inclinations. ---But there is a deficiency in their *Love*, a wavering in *Affection*, a division of Love, which is the cause of weakness and incapacity to make a proper advancement in a Christian life, or improvement in the progressive work of religion upon the soul. For, as I have hinted, while the BODY is terrestrial, the GLORY is terrestrial, until we are created anew in Christ Jesus, unto righteousness; wherein our minds will become cloathed with a *celestial* glory, and by the power of Divine Grace, be set above every earthly love:---And then the Love of God will prevail in our minds, and we shall attain an experience of additional strength, steadily to persevere in the arduous warfare of a Christian Life. And the Glory being celestial, our views are circumscribed within the limits of an *heavenly* love, wherein we are lifted up to God, being renewed in
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the spirit of our minds, and enabled to travel on towards the glorious city of the saints solemnity.

But it is a *deficiency* of Love, it is a cleaving to other things, inconsistent with the purity of the Divine Nature, that has slain ten thousands!--A secret defection of *Heart*, which no human eye hath been privy to, has slain more than open Prophanity!--A degeneracy of Heart, a secret sliding from the Covenant of Life, in those who are turning aside into the path of irreligion, and a mental deviation from the purity of nature, and holiness; the necessary requisite to an union and divine participation in the Love of God.

I think it is said with very great propriety, that
 “ the love of money is the root of all evil; which
 “ while some have lusted after, they have erred
 “ from the faith, and pierced themselves through
 “ with many sorrows *.”--But though it may seem to many not needful to tell of these things, methinks it is applicable to some in these days who would be deemed “ *Men of God* :” and for whom I wish, as for myself, that when the heavens shall roll back as a scroll, and eternity shall open upon us, when our views of these lower objects shall vanish and disappear, when the Arch-angel’s trump shall sound to judgment, and a righteous retribution is made, we may be *found* men of God!--“ But, O “ *Man of God*,” that hast *these* things in view,
 think

* 1 Tim. vi. 10.

think on the unutterable prospect of infinite happiness, the reward of obedience, and “*flee* these things.” Flee the glory and splendor of this transient world; continue to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

This is the language of the Love of God to this assembly, that we may be *found* “Men of God,” when all the glory of this world, with its splendor and dependencies, shall come to a conclusion; that when every human aid shall vanish, and no worldly assistance is near, the Love of God may cover our spirits in all our trials; that when every human help is totally suspended, we may continue to feel the effects of his mercy and goodness happily to spread in our minds, to their edification and unspeakable joy.—Herein we receive a divine evidence of love, communicated from that boundless Source of unutterable Grace wherewith he has visited us, in order to *dwell* in our hearts, or that He may, “dwell in us richly.”—And thus we are brought to discern the beauty of holiness, the uniformity of love, to open the mind beyond the contracted view of human powers, into the glorious fruition of divine essential Love, the Love of God, that would thus dwell in our hearts and minds; and then we may witness him to be “with us all, always. Amen.” He will be a light to our paths, and an aid at
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hand, while we are travelling through the various difficulties and probations in life.—May the Shepherd of Israel, “ who sleeps not by day, nor slumbers by night,” attend you ! and may we place our whole dependance upon him, as our support and all-sufficient strength in every needful time !

And dearly-beloved youth ! you that are entering upon the stage of active life, be ever vigilantly concerned to improve the present moments, and that you may build beyond the habitation of sorrow ; that all the high places may be removed, and your minds become replenished with true consolation.—And as you are not always to expect one uniform joyous scene, but clouds of darkness sometimes interrupt the prospects of pleasure, in your pilgrimage through life, prepare your minds, by zealously endeavouring after the Love of God ; and wait to know, in yourselves, the unspeakable advantage of his heavenly aid and assistance, offered to conduct you through the various scenes of mortality, to the righteous and awful presence of the Judge of heaven and earth ; which will continue to sustain you, when no human consolation can afford relief ; even when your offences appear as a flood, surrounded with temptation and distress, and you are ready to cry out, “ who shall deliver me from “ the wrath of an offended Creator !” In this state of anxious solicitude, your heavenly Father is mercifully pleased to arise, and administer relief to such, who are thus “ hungering and thirsting after
“ righte-

"righteousness;" and the cup of life and salvation is handed to their comfort, from the glorious Helper, that in . . . strength you may be enabled to stand unshaken in the troublous time!--And it is to these he waits to be gracious; a helper at hand, from whom proceeds every power to assist, and every attribute of mercy, kindness, goodness, and adorable condescension, are graciously dispensed to the sons of men, wherein they are established in righteousness and true holiness.

"He touches the mountains, and they melt:" every obstruction that would hinder the progress or advancement of this divine, essential, efficacious work of redemption upon the soul, must be removed; every unavailing connexion must give place to the ties of an ardent and sanctified Love.

"He touches the mountains, and they melt; "the everlasting hills, they bow at his presence." In his mercy we experience the removing of those things, that oppose or prevent an increase in the knowledge of God, or of the things appertaining to our everlasting peace; in order that the exercised pilgrim in his progress may receive additional strength, to run with alacrity the race of a christian life, and finally attain an happy union with the sons of the morning, who sing together for joy.

It is the glorious benefits proceeding from the Love of God, which I earnestly intreat that the youth, of all names and distinctions to religion, may carefully seek, and avail yourselves of, that HE may be with you through the various steps of a probationary life. And though you may sometimes have to travel in the exercised path of temptation and anxious distress, continue in *hope*, and you will feel his LIGHT to arise in your hearts, and witness an inward resurrection unto LIFE; that Life that will never fade, but will remain, when every tender and lawful connexion can no longer comfort, but must soon be dissolved, and the sympathy one for another shall be ineffectual to deliver. All the tender connexions in life are but of uncertain duration, and upon them all this inscription is wrote, "They shall shortly perish;" but the LOVE of GOD *never fades*:---It is continued from generation to generation, and will remain when Time shall be swallowed up in Eternity: -- It is this wherein we taste of the *Goodness* of God, and are made to drink the cup of life and salvation, and have to rejoice in the unspeakable fruition of happiness it affords to the sanctified in heart, who in future time, as well as the present, will have to say, "Spring up, O well, and we will "sing unto thee;"--it will remain an enduring portion to the Ransomed in Jacob, and to the Redeemed in Israel; and will be an excellent comfort in the time of probation and exercise, through
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through the silent steps of anxiety and secret distress, known to none but GOD and thy own Soul.

HE knows ALL things, by whose merciful aid we are sustained through "the Regions of the shadow of Death," when every unavailing relation or human dependancy shall disappear and come to an end. What *then*, can sustain us, but the Love of God?---It is that which covers the head in the day of battle; and which I would recommend, with a fervent affection, to you who are the hopes of the present age, that you ardently endeavour after the Love of God, that will never decrease with age; it enlarges upon the mind, and is increased with an increase of Love: It proceeds from the THRONE of God, and spreads from the Threshold of his House: It is continued through the Courts of his Sanctuary, and reaches to the Uttermost Part of the Earth; and is as a "RIVER, the Streams whereof make glad the whole Heritage of God."

All the beauty and splendour of the world will fade; and the excellency of temporal enjoyments, which are the portion of uncertainty, shall shortly know their time and place no more: But the Love of God, flowing from Himself, returns upon the sanctified soul as a River that never *passeth by*, proceeding from the inexhaustible SOURCE of Love: it spreads through the various states of mankind, and is diffused throughout the spiritual creation of his

his Son, unlimited, as Eternity ! A degree of which I feel upon my mind for this assembly, with an aidency that cannot be expressed, “ that he may be “ with you All, always. Amen ! ” — For the Love of God imparted to the sanctified Soul, and a portion of the Holy Ghost, and Divine Approbation in Communion, hath been such, as “ Eye hath not “ seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into “ the heart of man to conceive the good things “ that God hath in store for them that love him.” ||

III. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost.

This is the bond that binds, and wherein we are united to God, and know it to be a Well springing up unto Eternal Life.---It is not in External Helps, nor in the agreement of Words, neither is it in the Consent of Doctrine, or in fine-spun regular Systems, to constitute a “ Communion of the Holy Ghost.” But it is as we are admitted to a sacred repast in the divine “ Banqueting-house,” (wherein we offer the oblation of Worship, a Cloud of Incense, arising from hearts prepared by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the love of God,) that we are advanced to a divine Communion of the Holy Ghost. A communion not restrained to any Distinction or Profession of People, but extended to all such as experience an union and fellowship in Spirit, wherein they are sometimes lifted up

up to the Father of spirits, and enabled to approach him "in Spirit and in Truth;" which has often been sealed with the Love and Approbation of God, in a divine manifestation of his kindness and goodness to men, "who eat that which is good, "and delight themselves in fatness," being renewed in the spirit of their minds, and enabled to lay hold on eternal life.

In this Communion, this unutterable, this inconceivable Communion, many have found their "Strength to be renewed," and their Hearts engaged in the solemn Worship of God, the Author of their being: A communion inexpressible in its nature! May those minds, who have attained this happy experience, continue therein in all humility and purity!

It is a Communion in *Spirit*, wherein the sanctified soul approaches the Author of spirits with a Sacrifice in spirit, when the sacrifice of Words shall fail.---For there is a Communion which Language cannot *express*! A Worship that wants not the aid of *Words*, nor is to be defined by an Harmony of Sounds, in which we approach the sacred Author of unutterable Love!

When there was "Silence in Heaven for about "the Space of Half an Hour;"* when the Vocal "Tribute of Holy, Holy, Holy," and the Hallelujahs of sanctified Spirits in endless felicity were suspended,

* Rev. viii. 1.

suspended, their *Worship* continued in awful, holy, solemn, inconceivable SILENCE! It was a Rapturous Adoration, too copious for Language to express! A Cloud of Incense, before the Throne of immaculate Purity and Love!--May our minds be gathered to it, let our Name or Profession to Religion be what it may! and may we experience this Divine Communion of Saints, and deeply ponder God's unbounded Love, in solemn Silence! For there is no Power of Eloquence can sufficiently acknowledge the Obligation and Reverence we owe HIS Infinite MAJESTY, who fills heaven and earth with his glory and goodness!--But let us look up unto him, and wait to be prepared for it;--for "they that wait upon the Lord shall "renew their strength;"--wherein we may experience a constant advancement from Grace to Grace, until we attain the glorious end proposed by this lively animating salutation (which I wish for you as for myself.) The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, "the Love of God, and the Communion of the "Holy Ghost, be with you all, always. Amen."

The Substance of a Few Expressions delivered by

SAMUEL FOTHERGILL

To some of his Relations, when they took Leave of him, on the 30th of the Fifth Month, 1772, previous to their setting out for the Yearly Meeting in London, viz.

OUR Health is no more at our Command, than length of Days:—mine seems drawing fast towards a Conclusion,—I think: but I am content with every Allotment of Providence, for they are all in Wisdom,—unerring Wisdom.

There is ONE THING, which, as an Arm underneath, bears up and supports; and though the rolling tempestuous Billows surround, yet my Head is kept above them, and my Feet are firmly established—Oh! seek it,—press after it,—lay fast hold of it.

Though painful my Nights, and wearisome my Days, yet I am preserved in Patience and Resignation.—Death has no Terrors, nor will the Grave

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have any Victory.—My Soul triumphs over Death, Hell, and the Grave.

Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Health and Riches, must all go—*Disappointment* is another Name for them.

I should have been thankful had I been able to have got to the ensuing Yearly Meeting in London, which you are now going to attend, where I have been so often refreshed with my Brethren; but it is otherwise allotted—I shall remember them, and some of them will remember me—The Lord knows best, what is best for us;—I am content, and resigned to his Will.

I feel a Foretaste of the Joy that is to come; and who would wish to change such a State of Mind?

I should be glad if an easy Channel could be found to inform the Yearly Meeting, that as I have lived, so I shall close with the most unshaken Assurance that we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, but the pure, living, eternal Substance.

Let the aged be strong; let the middle-aged be animated, and the Youth encouraged; for the Lord is still with Sion; the Lord will bless Sion!

If

If I be now removed out of his Church Militant, where I have endeavoured in some Measure to fill up my Duty, I have an EVIDENCE that I shall gain an Admittance into his glorious Church Triumphant, far above the Heavens.

My dear love is to all them that love the Lord Jesus.

Samuel Fothergill departed this Life the 15th of the Sixth Month, 1772, in the 59th Year of his Age; and the above Expressions were read in the Yearly Meeting at or near the Conclusion thereof.

F I N I S.

Erratum, Page 18, Line 8, for Meditation read Mediation.

15 JY 64

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